

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Emergency Feeding During Unexpected Closures for Schools and Sponsor Agencies of School Nutrition Programs, Seamless Summer Option, Summer Food Service Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program

Updates to document:

5/22 – Updates in red font.

5/6 – Updates in green font.

Planning:

1. What SFAs or Sponsor agencies are eligible to continue feeding kids during the school closures?
 - a. School Food Authorities that currently operate the **School Nutrition Programs** are eligible to use the **Seamless Summer Option (SSO)** or **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** if they are in good standing.

Current **Child and Adult Care Food Program** sponsors in good standing with program rules are eligible to operate an emergency feeding program if they are closed and no children are in attendance. They may continue operating **CACFP** or can check to see if they qualify to operate under **SFSP**.

Previously approved **Summer Food Service Program** sponsors in good standing may be eligible to operate during the school closures.

New sponsor agencies that wish to begin operating a Child Nutrition Program (SFSP, CACFP, or SNP) may not be eligible to do emergency feeding. Please contact the CANS office DOE.SchoolLunch@state.sd.us or (605) 773-3413.

2. Can Hutterite colonies participating in NSLP/SBP continue to provide meals and how?
 - a. Colony sites that typically operate the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program must be considered Closed Enrolled sites according to Governor Noem's mandate. If you would like to continue to serve and claim colony meals, the school district must have an approved SSO or SFSP site application for that colony.

Also, please remember that the waivers currently in place from USDA require non-congregate feeding, using unitized meals that meet the meal pattern. You have the option to not claim the colony meals during the unexpected closure if they continue to feed family style, or you can work with them to serve non-congregate, unitized meals which meet the full meal pattern requirements.

Schools cannot operate SSO/SFSP and SNP at the same time, so submitting claims for both programs will not be allowed during the closure. Keep in mind that the month of March may have an SNP claim and an SSO claim, as the unexpected closure did not occur until mid-way through the month.

3. Can my Sponsor agency continue operating and change the way meals are served to encourage social distancing to prevent the spread of illness?
 - a. Yes, please call the CANS office to discuss. This may result in the addition of an emergency feeding site to your iCAN application.
4. Is extra funding from the USDA available to deliver meals or for the added cost of grab and go meals?
 - a. No, there is no additional funding available from the federal program. These expenses are allowable costs under SNP, SFSP, CACFP, and SSO.

5. My School Nutrition Program has an excess fund balance account that is over the three-month operating surplus, can my SFA serve free meals to all children while school is closed even though I am only approved to operate a Closed Enrolled site and receive reimbursement for the enrolled students?
 - a. Typically this is not an allowable cost to the program. Allowable costs to the program must be in direct support of the operation of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable.

It is also not allowed to serve meals under this special circumstance free of charge to all children and not submit a claim for reimbursement. The meals created and served using Food Service funds must be reimbursable meals. Creating meals that are not reimbursable are not an allowable cost to the Food Service account.
6. Can I use my USDA Foods or entitlement during emergency feeding?
 - a. Yes, USDA Foods (commodities) can be used for any USDA FNS Child Nutrition Programs (SNP, SSO, SFSP, and CACFP).
7. Who should I contact if I have any questions about school and child feeding programs in South Dakota?
 - a. Contact the SD Department of Education, Child and Adult Nutrition Services (CANS) office at: phone number (605) 773-3413, email: DOE.SchoolLunch@state.sd.us, fax (605) 773-6846

Requirements to Follow for Emergency Feeding:

8. How does my school or sponsor agency get started?
 - a. Please review the CANS website (<https://doe.sd.gov/cans/index.aspx>) under the section *Announcements Regarding Coronavirus/COVID-19*.
 - I. Start with the [Instructions on how to apply](#) and send an email with the information to DOE.SchoolLunch@state.sd.us
 - II. Review the ***Frequently Asked Questions*** document
 - III. Complete the ***Unexpected School Closure Supplement Form 1*** and attach to your iCAN application as instructed.
 - IV. Complete the UC site applications listed in iCAN.
9. Do children need to be present to receive a reimbursable meal? Can I drop off meals at a site or have an adult pick up the meals?
 - a. Program requirements indicate that meals must be served/provided directly to children, however, USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) recognizes that in this public health emergency, continuing to require children to come to the meal site to pick up meals may not be practical, and has granted a waiver from student presence when receiving a meal. This waiver is available for SSO, SNP, SFSP, CACFP.

Program operators may request to use this flexibility to distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their children by completing the [Child Not Present Waiver Form](#) and email completed form to DOE.SchoolLunch@state.sd.us.

When completing the Child Presence Waiver, please note: (1): feeding site(s) the waiver is requested for; (2): Describe processes used to ensure that meals are distributed only to parents/guardians of eligible children and that duplicate meals are not distributed; and (3): How the waiver approval will improve services to program participants.
10. Is my School Food Authority (SFA) or Sponsor agency required to continue following all of the normal program requirements?
 - a. Yes, if you are claiming meals for reimbursement all the normal program requirements remain in place for SFAs and Sponsor agencies. Requirements such as proper program meal pattern requirements, production records, proper point of service meal counts, food safety logs, etc. must be followed as

normally required by the program. Only the requirements for congregate feeding and the prohibition of summer feeding from occurring at a school, and the other specific nationwide waivers received from the USDA noted in this document.

For agencies operating the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the following link provides the SFSP meal pattern: <https://doe.sd.gov/cans/documents/SFSP-MealChart.pdf>

11. My participating school or sponsor agency is experiencing challenges in meeting meal pattern requirements due to lack of food availability, what options do I have?
- Program operators (SNP, SSO, SFSP, CACFP) must meet meal pattern requirements, however, USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) recognizes potential disruptions to the availability of food products resulting from unprecedented impacts of COVID-19, and has granted a waiver from the meal pattern requirements.

If you are facing a shortage or absence of food to meet the meal pattern requirement, program operators may request approval to serve meals that do not meet the full meal pattern requirement. If your school or sponsor agency cannot purchase food as a result of COVID-19 shortages, please complete the [Meal Pattern Waiver Form](#), and email to DOE.SchoolLunch@state.sd.us.

Program operators that wish to request a Meal Pattern Waiver complete the following and send to DOE.SchoolLunch@state.sd.us: (1): an explanation of why you cannot purchase the specified foods, (2): the specific meal service days impacted, and (3): efforts you made to meet the meal pattern requirements.

This waiver must be completed each time a meal does not meet the meal pattern compliance. Without the CANS office approving your waiver request, the meals missing components or required quantities are not reimbursable. With an approved waiver, meals are reimbursable.

12. Does my school or sponsor agency have to follow procurement procedures during the COVID-19 emergency?
- Federal procurement regulations at 2 CFR 200.320(f) allow procurement by noncompetitive proposals when there is a public emergency.

Your procurement plan should include an Emergency Clause that outlines how to make purchases during an emergency. Make sure to keep documentation for each purchase, note the reason for the emergency, and keep that on file with your normal procurement documents.

13. Under SSO, is my UC site eligible to serve the K-8 or 9-12 meal pattern for lunch to all students regardless of their grade?
- You must follow your normal meal patterns used during school time, the exception is if your SSO is an **OPEN** site. If you choose the waiver option in the SSO site application complete in Part 5 in the Supplement Form 1.

14. What is "Area Eligible?"
- Sites that have a 50% or higher free and reduced student eligibility rate are "Area Eligible" and that means that site can feed all children (ages 0-18) for free and receive the free reimbursement rate for each meal. This site eligibility can be from any month during the school year.

Sites that do not meet that 50% or higher free and reduced student eligibility rate are NOT "Area Eligible." These sites are called Closed Enrolled sites. Only students enrolled in the school district may be fed and the site must keep track of student names during the meal count. The site may not feed any child that is not enrolled to attend their school.

15. Is there an “Area Eligible Waiver”?

- a. Yes, South Dakota received an Area Eligible waiver for the operation of emergency feeding in SSO and SFSP. Sites choose to operate as an Area Eligible site with this waiver. This waiver does not apply to CACFP.

If your school or sponsor agency would like to utilize this waiver, please send an email to DOE.SchoolLunch@state.sd.us with “**Opt in to Area Eligibility Feeding**” in the subject line. Your email will serve as acknowledgement that you understand the requirements to use this option, and you may begin using it as soon as it is feasible for your school.

CAUTION: If your school or sponsor agency has also requested to use the “Child Not Present Waiver,” the school or sponsor agency is expected to follow previously approved procedures until the school or sponsor agency requests to update their procedure in the iCAN site application. Per federal waiver requirements, a survey will be sent to all schools and sponsor agencies using this waiver to show the need for this waiver in South Dakota.

16. Can I serve reimbursable meals on weekends, on non-school days (i.e. a 4 day a week school or spring break), and holidays ?

- a. Under SSO and SFSP this is allowed. This is not allowed on CACFP.

17. Can my SFA or Sponsor agency hand out more than one meal at one meal service time?

- a. Yes, a school can prepare and serve multiple meals at one delivery time. Each meal must be a complete meal that follows your meal pattern requirements (typically the same requirements used during normal school days). No more than 1 week of meals/snacks may be provided at once. Meals must be given to eligible children. Offer versus serve is not allowed **for SSO or CACFP**; this means the child is not allowed to decline any food, including milk. The menu must be communicated to each family including food safety information and safe heating instructions, if applicable.

Please keep in mind food safety and the quality of the food. For example, an assembled ham and cheese sandwich will become soggy after a day or two, so serve the meat and cheese in bulk separately from the bread.

- b. **Offer Versus Serve is only allowed in limited circumstances with SFSP operation, per COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #16, Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities in the Summer Food Service Program, dated April 21, 2020. SFSP Operators that wish to utilize Offer Versus Serve during the unexpected closure will be asked to provide specific operation information to ensure proper implementation.**

18. In my SSO/SFSP application I estimated that 300 students would come to pick up meals, but my first day 500 students came to pick up meals, how many meals can I claim?

- a. In SSO, you can claim the 500 reimbursable meals served to eligible students. The number recorded in your application is a planning tool.

In SFSP, you must let the CANS office know and a quick update must be made in your application before submitting the claim for reimbursement.

19. Can schools or sponsor agencies offer infant formula or infant cereal from an open school feeding site?

- a. A school or sponsor agency must be preapproved in SFSP or CACFP to serve infant meals according to the CACFP meal pattern (7 CFR 226.20(b) and 7 CFR 225.16(f)(2)).

20. Can a previously approved CACFP center that does not normally offer infant meals temporarily provide formula or infant cereal to families and claim them for reimbursement?
- The childcare center must include this in their UC application before serving infant formula or cereal. Under current guidance, only grab n go meal options from the approved childcare center UC site is allowed. Meal distribution and delivery options are not currently allowed. Families with infants need to enroll their infants in the childcare center in order to receive the grab and go formula. This might look a little odd since the center is not actually providing direct care for the infant. However, the center needs the enrollment form to identify the normal day and hours in care, to ensure they are in compliance with the recordkeeping requirements for meals and to get reimbursed.

Meal Delivery:

21. Can meals be delivered directly to children's homes?
- SSO, CACFP, and SFSP meals may be delivered if it is logistically and financially feasible. Meals may only be served to children who are in Area Eligible locations (including sites operating under the SD Area Eligible waiver) or are eligible for free and reduced-price meals in Close Enrolled sites. Children that do not qualify for free or reduced-price meals in Close Enrolled sites do not qualify for home delivery. The SFA delivery plan in Supplement Form 1 must include designated times for delivery. All children attending a Provision 2, Provision 3, or Community Eligible Provision school are eligible for delivered meals.
22. If my agency wants to deliver meals directly to children's homes, what other requirements must be completed?
- Agencies must first obtain **written consent** from households of eligible children (includes email or other electronic means) that the household wants to receive delivered meals. In addition, agencies/sites should confirm the household's current contact information and the number of eligible children in the household to ensure the correct number of meals are delivered to the correct location. Also, as assurance statement that the family understands that they can only receive the delivered meals and cannot also participate in any other Child Nutrition Program that may be also serving the same meals at a school or sponsor agency open site.

The notification must alert the household if contact information will be shared with an external organization, for example, a local non-profit that will provide meal delivery. If the school is using a private vendor, they must have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the vendor concerning the confidentiality requirements.

23. Does the child need to be present for home meal delivery?
- No. As long as the school has obtained the household's written consent to deliver meals and has verified the current address, the student does not need to be present at the time of delivery. If the meals are shelf-stable, no one need be present, as long as the address has been verified. Please consider state and local food safety requirements and best practices.
24. How can meals be delivered?
- By mail, delivery service, or hand-delivered by school staff, volunteers, community organizations, or others.

Meals Offered during Distance Learning:

25. What options do schools have if the school facilities are closed but they continue to offer online learning?
- Schools may operate SFSP and SSO programs as permitted under program requirements.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

26. May the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) be provided during the unexpected closure?

- a. Yes, if an elementary school was approved to serve FFVP in the current school year, those schools may continue serving the FFVP snack.
- b. FFVP snacks may be provided to elementary students at any non-congregate setting, including home delivery, and it may be served at the same time as another child nutrition meal service.
- c. The FFVP offering may not be provided to parents/guardians, unless accompanied by the child(ren). Children must be visible at the meal service site or delivery when the FFVP snack is offered.
 - I. As of 5/6/20, participating FFVP sites can complete the Child Presence Waiver for FFVP. Approval of this waiver would allow a parent/guardian to pick up the FFVP offering for the child.
- d. If your site is operating as Area Eligible or under the SD Area Eligible Waiver, you may provide the FFVP offering to any child that picks meals up from the site.
- e. If multiple meals are provided at one time, the school may also provide multiple servings of FFVP snacks at one time.
- f. School districts with multiple approved FFVP sites may shift funds from a site that has ceased operations to another site within the district, per USDA Memo SP 19-2020, dated May 19, 2020. Please be sure to communicate with CANS if you are interested in moving funds from one site to another.
- g. The FFVP offering is in addition to meal distribution. FFVP snacks cannot also count toward required meal components.

Meal Counting and Claiming for Reimbursement:

27. What meals can be reimbursed?

- a. Meal service that complies with the following specially waived provisions:
 - I. Meals served at an SFA or Sponsor agency that have been approved to serve meals under SSO, SFSP, or CACFP during an unexpected closure. These meals must be served to eligible children as a complete, unitized meal; Offer Versus Serve is NOT allowed for SSO or CACFP, and is allowed in limited circumstances for SFSP; see #17b above for details. Proper meal counts are taken at the point of service. Meals are reimbursed at the free rate and children are served meals free of charge.
 - II. Meals served during an unexpected closure do not need to be served in a group setting, like typical school cafeteria meal service. Meals may be served to encourage “social distancing,” some examples include:
 - “Grab and Go” a child may come to the feeding site to pick up a meal that is not immediately eaten at the site.
 - “Drive Thru” a family may drive up to a feeding site with their children to pick up a meal. The family drives away to eat the meal somewhere else.
 - Meals delivered to low income neighborhoods for pick up by families. An SFA or Sponsor agency can drive meals to an area for distribution to eligible children. The children take the meals away from the distribution site to eat somewhere else.
 - Meals delivered on the normal bus routes for families to pick up.

28. What numbers do I submit for reimbursement for breakfast and lunch, can I submit an estimate or the number of meals I prepare?

- a. Estimates are not acceptable, your claim can only include reimbursable meals served to eligible children. Just like in normal operations you cannot submit an estimate, or the number of meals prepared, but not served or your claim for reimbursement. Only proper point of service meals that accurately record eligible children receiving the reimbursable meal each day.

29. How should my Closed Enrolled Site keep a meal count of only my districts enrolled student meals?

- a. Many schools are using a printed list of student names or using their normal point of service system. Please keep in mind that you are trying to prevent people from passing the virus on. If using a PIN, consider how you disinfect the pad between students, or can one staff member enter the PIN for the student.

30. What should I enter into my point of sale computer system to get free meals entered?
- Please work with your software vendor to determine a way to temporarily allow free meals for all students. If your software vendor is unable to do this in your system, you may need to work with your Business Official to determine an acceptable method to keep these meal counts on file for audits and program reviews.
31. If my school or sponsor agency is offering more than one meal for pick up, how do I document the meal counts for reimbursement?
- The school should have a clear method on the meal count form of each meal (breakfast, lunch, snack, supper), date that each meal should be consumed, and the date of meal service. For example, the point of service paperwork should clearly state that: Meals served on 3/16/2020 include 2 lunches and 2 breakfast meals served for dates. Lunch dates are: 3/16 and 3/17; Breakfast dates are: 3/17 and 3/18.
32. On what days should I claim the meals for reimbursement – on the day of service or the day they should be eaten?
- The day the meal should be eaten.
33. In the iCAN system claim for reimbursement, where do I enter my Unexpected Closure meal counts?
- The meal counts you submit for reimbursement **must be recorded separately from your normal school or center operation**. This is a federal reporting requirement. Please add your meal counts to the new “UC” sites that were added to your SSO or SFSP application.

For meal counts taken during normal school day or normal operating days, those meals should be added to your normal SNP or CACFP sites. **Do not add meal counts to both locations.**

Monitoring Requirements:

34. Are Monitoring Requirements still in place?
- USDA Food & Nutrition Service has waived the some onsite monitoring requirements during the unanticipated closure. Specifics about these waivers must be documented in your agreement with CANS. Please contact the CANS office if your sponsor agency is a Sponsoring organization in CACFP or SFSP. A brief summary of available flexibilities:
 - CACFP onsite monitoring requirements for CACFP sponsoring organizations: Observation of meal service during unannounced review; no more than six months may elapse between reviews, included in 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii).
 - CACFP sponsors may conduct two reviews of their CACFP facilities. **Requirement for reviews to occur within six months is waived.**
 - Only one CACFP facility review is required to be unannounced.
 - New facilities must still receive at least one review within the first four weeks, however, this waiver allows sponsoring organizations to review new CACFP facilities as a desk audit.
 - SFSP onsite monitoring requirements for sponsoring organizations: Training and monitoring for administrative and site personnel, included at 7 CFR 225.15(d). **SFSP sponsors may elect to waive onsite review requirements (such as on-site observation during first week of operation), and instead complete monitoring and review offsite.**
 - SFSP sponsors may also postpone SFSP site reviews until normal summer operations (May through August 2020).
 - If a SFSP site is only operating during the COVID-19 emergency, the SFSP sponsor must conduct the required review, but may elect to do so offsite.

Approved Waivers from USDA FNS:

35. What are the approved USDA waivers and what do they cover?

- a. The CANS office has received approvals from USDA for the waivers posted on the [CANS website](#) under the Announcements Regarding Coronavirus/COVID-19.